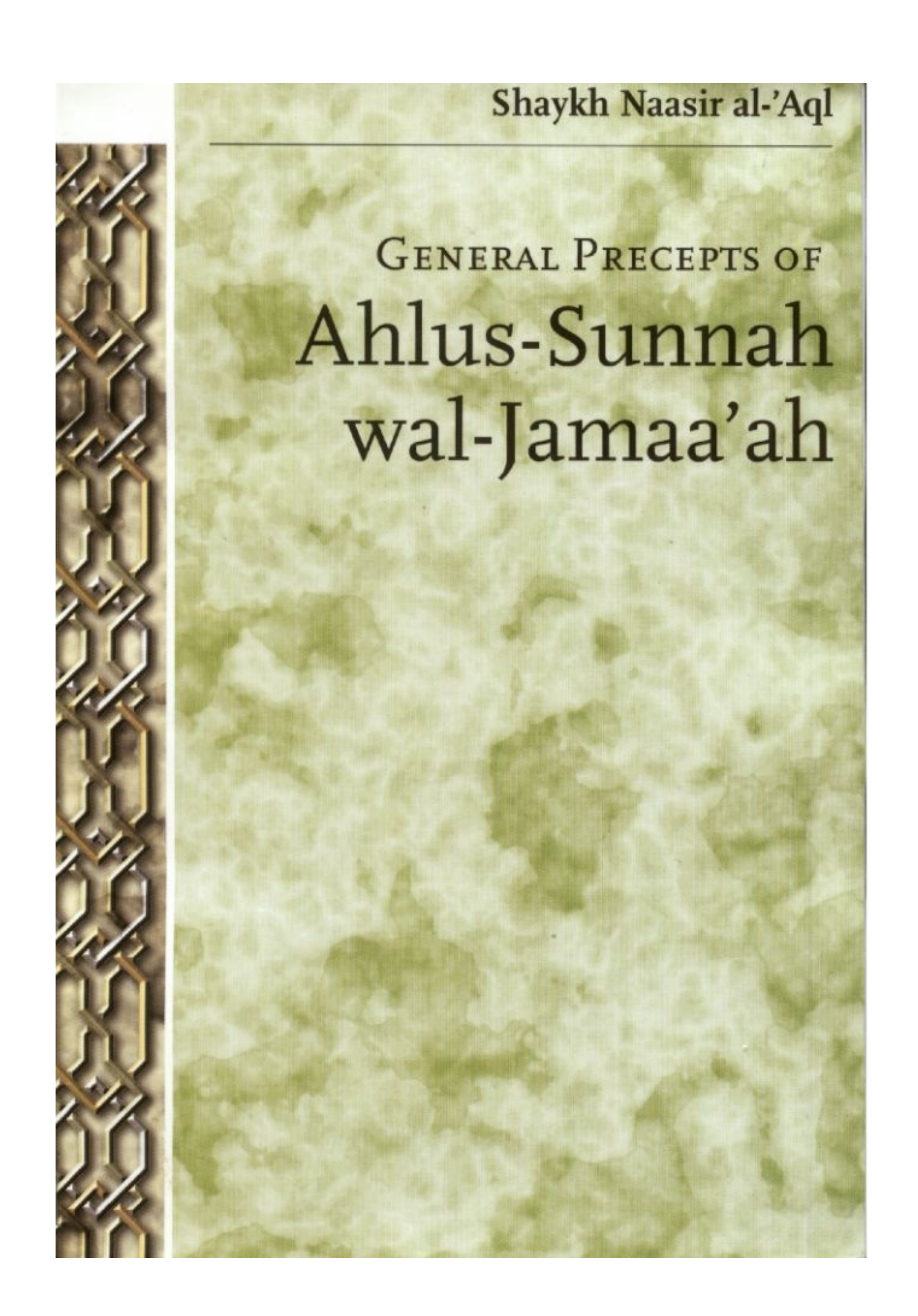

Shaykh Naasir al-'Aql
GENERAL PRECEPTS OF
Ahlus-Sunnah
wal-Jamaa'ah

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Indeed all praise is for Allaah. We praise Him, seek His assistance and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evil promptings of our souls and from our evil actions. Whosoever Allaah guides, none can misguide; and whosoever Allaah leaves to stray, none can guide aright. I testify that none has the right to be worshiped except Allaah alone, having no partner; and I testify that Muhammad sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam is His Slave and His Messenger.

To proceed:

Allaah the Exalted has decreed that this Religion (deen) will continue to remain and that He will ensure its preservation. He, the Mighty and Majestic, said:

> "**Indeed We revealed this Reminder and it is We Who will safeguard it.**" [al-Hijr 15:91]

The Prophet sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

> **"There will not cease to be a group from my Ummah victorious upon the truth, not being harmed by those who oppose them, until the command of Allaah comes, and they are like that."** [Reported by Muslim (no.1920) from Thawbaan radiallaahu 'anhu].

He sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam also said:

> **"This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy ones of each generation. They will expel from it the alteration of those going beyond bounds; the false claims of the liars; and the false interpretations of the ignorant ones."** [Hasan: Reported by al-Bayhaqee in as-Sunanul-Kubraa (10/209). It was declared to be sound (hasan) by Shaykh Saleem al-Hilaalee in al-Basaa'ir Dhawish-Sharaf (pp.113-114)].

This group, through whom Allaah will continue to safeguard this Religion, is also the Saved-Sect; about whom the Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam mentioned the following:

> **"Indeed the children of Israa'eel split up into seventy--two sects and my ummah will split-up into seventy-three sects; all of them are in the Fire, except one." It was**

said: Who is the (saved) one? He replied: "That which I and my Companions are upon." [Hasan: Reported by at-Tirmidhee (no.2641) from 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr radiallaahu 'anhu. The hadeeth master (haafidh), Zaynud-Deen al-'Iraaqee, declared it to be hasan in. his Takhreejul-Ihyaa (3/225).]

The reliable scholars of this Religion are united upon the fact that this Saved-Sect is Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah; those who adhere to what the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and his Companions were upon.

ABOUT THE BOOK: This is a translation of the Arabic booklet entitled: Mujmal Usool Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah fil-'Aqeedah [A Summary of the Fundamental Precepts of The People of the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah With Regards Beliefs and Creed], written by Shaykh Naasir al-'Aql, may Allaah protect him.

Since there were certain terms and concepts, which were difficult to render into sound English, I took recourse to brother Ali at-Tamimi's translation of the book, which appeared in al-Basheer magazine a number of years ago. [Al-Basheer magazine (March-April 1993CE; pp.8-20)].

May Allaah reward him with goodness and may He also reward those who aided in checking and editing this present translation. Indeed Allaah is the One Who hears and the One Who responds.

Finally, all praise is for Allaah, Lord of the worlds; and may He extol and send the blessings of peace upon our master and leader (Sayyid), Muhammad; and upon his Family, Companions and all those who follow them upon goodness.

ABU 'AALIYAH SURKHEEL IBN ANWAR SHARIF
12th night of Dhul-Hijjah I4I9H
(28th of March 1999CE)
London, England

PREFACE

Indeed all praise is for Allaah. We praise Him, seek His aid and assistance and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evil promptings of our souls and our evil actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides, none can misguide; and whomsoever Allaah leaves to stray, none can guide aright. I testify that none has the right to be worshiped except Allaah alone; having no partner, and I testify that Muhammad sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam is His Slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

This is a brief treatise concerning the fundamental precepts (usool) of Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah as regard their beliefs and creed ('aqeedah). It was prepared and published in response to the request of many readers - students of knowledge as well as the general Muslims - who expressed the need for a clear, yet concise, presentation of the fundamentals of the creed of the Pious Predecessors (Salaf) and its principles; whilst at the same time adhering to the terms employed by the Sharee'ah that have been recorded from the scholars.

It is for this reason that this presentation is free from the details, definitions, evidences, names of personalities, quotations and footnotes that are quite often necessary for a work of this nature. Indeed, the desire to achieve such a small booklet was not possible at this time. Perhaps, if Allaah Wills, this presentation may become the basis for a specialist to fill in the gaps, thereby responding to the needs of those desiring more.

I have presented the completed work to the following: -

- The noble Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Naasir al-Buraak.
- The noble Shaykh 'Abdullaah ibn Muhammad al-Ghunaymaan.
- Dr. Hamzah ibn Husayn al-Fi'r.
- Dr. Safar ibn 'Abdur-Rahmaan al-Hawaalee.
- I subsequently presented it to our noble Shaykh, Dr. Saalih ibn Fawzaan al-Fawzaan, may Allaah reward him, who made certain amendments. [Out of the two printed editions of this booklet that have been relied upon for this present translation, the names of Shaykh al-Ghunaymaan and Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan appear only in one of them].

I thank each of them for adding their comments and suggestions; may Allaah reward them all with good.

I ask Allaah, the Most High, that He makes this work purely for His Face. And may Allaah extol and send blessings of peace upon our Prophet Muhammad - who was sent as a mercy to the worlds - and upon his Family and Companions and those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

Written by:
Naasir ibn 'Abdul-Kareem al-'Aql on 3/9/1411H.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistically the word 'aqeedah comes from the word al-'aqd, which means: To bind, to fasten tightly, to fortify, to consolidate. Technically it means: A firm and unwavering belief, which is not open to any doubt with its holder.

The Islaamic 'aqeedah refers to: An unwavering belief in Allaah the Most High and what is due to Him from exclusive worship and obedience. It also refers to an unwavering belief in His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in Pre-Decree. It likewise includes all that has been affirmed from the matters of the Unseen, the reports concerning previous nations, as well as all the definite reports, whether in matters pertaining to knowledge or action.

The Salaf (Predecessors): They are the initial era of this nation (ummah): the Companions, their followers and the rightly guided scholars of the first three excellent generations.

All those who follow the Salaf and traverse their path, in every age, are designated as being Salafee; due to their ascription to the Salaf.

Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa`ah: They are all those who are upon that which the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and his Companions were upon.

They are called Ahlus-Sunnah because of their adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

They are called the Jamaa'ah because they are the ones who gather upon the truth and do not split-up in their Religion; they gather upon the legitimate rulers and do not rebel against them; and they follow the consensus (ijmaa) of the Pious Predecessors of this ummah.

Since they are the ones who truly follow the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, following his path, they are also called the Traditionalists (ahlul-hadeeth), the People of Narration (ahlul-aathaar) and the Adherents (ahlul-ittibaa'). They are also called the Aided Group (at-taa`ifatul-mansoorah) and the Saved-Sect (al-firqatun-naajiyah).

-1-
GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED IN DERIVING THE CREED

1 - The sources for the creed ('aqeedah) are: The Book of Allaah, the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam and the consensus (ijmaa') of the Pious Predecessors.

2 - Everything that has been authentically reported from Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam must be accepted, even if it has been reported by way of a single solitary transmitted narration (aahaad).

3 - In order to understand the Book and the Sunnah we refer to those texts, which explain others, the understanding of the Pious Predecessors and those scholars who followed their methodology, and then what is correct from the language point of view. However, we do not reject something established due to a possible (alternate) language meaning.

4 - All the fundamental principles of the Religion were explained by the Prophet sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam. It is not for anyone to later innovate something and then claim it is part of the Religion.

5 - Submission to Allaah and His Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam both outwardly and inwardly. So neither the Book, nor the authentic Sunnah is to be opposed or contradicted by an analogy (qiyaas), personal spiritual experience (dhawq), spiritual intuition (kashf), nor the saying of any shaykh or scholar, nor by the likes of these.

6 - The sound intellect (al-'aql as-sareeh) agrees with and conforms to the authentic texts (an-naql as-saheeh). Whatever is definite (qat'ee) from either of them cannot contradict the other. If there is an apparent contradiction between the two, then the text is to be given precedence.

7 - It is obligatory to adhere to the textual and Sharee'ah wordings in matters pertaining to the creed and to avoid innovated terms and wordings that have been introduced by the people. As regards wordings, which contain more than one possible meaning and may either be correct or incorrect, then the meaning should first be ascertained. If the meaning is correct, then it is affirmed, but [replaced] with a Sharee'ah wording. However, if the meaning is incorrect, then it is to be rejected.

8 - Infallibility is established for Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam. The ummah as a collective body is also protected from uniting upon error.

However, as for the individuals of this ummah, then they are not infallible. Whenever there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars, it is referred back to the Book and the Sunnah and whatever is proven by an evidence, is to be accepted. This is done along with advancing an excuse to those who erred from the scholars of this ummah.

9 - In this ummah there are some who are addressed (muhaddath) with spiritual intuition, such as 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab. Good dreams are true and are a part of Prophethood. Likewise, truthful intuition is a true fact and is considered as being one of the miraculous occurrences (karamaat), providing it conforms with the Revelation. However, such dreams and intuitions are not in themselves a source for (establishing) beliefs or legislative rulings (tashree').

10 - Argumentation about the Religion is censured, whilst debating in a good manner is prescribed. As for those matters about which it is prohibited to discuss, then it is obligatory to avoid delving into them. It is also obligatory to withhold from speaking about those matters about which one has no knowledge, but to resign knowledge of it back to Allaah.

11 - It is obligatory to adhere to the methodology of the Revelation when refuting, just as it is obligatory in matters pertaining to the creed. An innovation is not refuted with another innovation, nor is negligence refuted with extremity, nor visa-versa.

12 - Every newly-invented matter pertaining to the Religion is an innovation (bid'ah); every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hell-Fire.

-2-
TAWHEED IN KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS

1 - The basic principle concerning the Names and Attributes (al-asmaa was-sifaat) of Allaah is to affirm whatever Allaah affirmed for Himself and whatever His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam affirmed for Him; but without resemblance (tamtheel) or questioning how (takyeef); as well as to negate whatever Allaah negated from Himself and whatever His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam negated from Him; but without distortion (tahreef) or denial (ta'teel). Allaah the Exalted said:

> **"There is none like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."** [Soorah ash-Shooraa 42:11]

This requires having faith in the meanings of the textual wordings, as well as what is implied by them.

2 - Resemblance and denial with regards to Allaah's Names and Attributes, constitutes disbelief (kufr). As for distortion (tahreef), which the innovators call figurative interpretation (ta`weel), then some forms constitute disbelief; such as the to ta`weel of the Baatiniyyah sect, some forms constitute heresy (bid'ah); such as the false interpretations of those who deny the Attributes of Allaah, yet other forms merely fall into being mistakes.

3 - The belief in pantheism [that all existence is actually a single existence that is identified with Allaah (wahdatul-wujood), or Allaah's incarnation into anything from the creation (hulool), or Allaah's union or merging with anything from the creation (ittihaad), all constitute [that type of] disbelief which expels a person from the fold of Islaam.

4 - To have a general faith in the Noble Angels. As for detailed faith, then it is (to have faith) in what has been authentically established concerning their names, attributes and actions in accordance with one's level of knowledge.

5 - To have faith in all the Divinely-Revealed Books and that the Glorious Qur'aan is the best of them and that it abrogates all the previous Books. Faith in the fact that distortion has occurred to all the Divinely-Revealed Books before the Qur'aan, is also required. Due to this, it is obligatory to follow the Qur'aan, to the exclusion of all other previous Books.

6 - To have faith in the Prophets of Allaah and His Messengers -may Allaah extol and send blessings of peace upon them all - and that they are the best of all mankind. Whosoever claims other than this has disbelieved. It is obligatory to have faith in whosoever the authentic evidence specifies as being a Prophet or Messenger by name, as well as to have faith in all the rest in general. Faith

that Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is the best and the last of them and that Allaah sent him to the whole of mankind is also required.

7 - To believe in the termination of Revelation (wahee) after Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and that he is the seal and the last of the Prophets and Messengers. Whosoever believes contrary to this has disbelieved.

8 - To have faith in the Last Day and all that is authentically reported about it and all that heralds it from its signs and conditions.

9 - To have faith in Pre-Decree and Predestination (al-qadr) and that its good and evil outcome is from Allaah the Exalted. And faith in it includes: Believing that Allaah the Most High knows what will occur before it occurs; that He has written this all in the Preserved Tablet (al-lawhul-mahfoodh); that whatever Allaah wishes occurs and whatever He does not wish, does not occur; that nothing can occur except if He wills; that Allaah has power over everything; that He is the Creator of everything; and that He does whatever He chooses.

10 - To have faith in all that is authentically related concerning the matters of the Unseen; such as the Throne (al-'arsh), the Chair (al-kursee), Paradise, Hellfire, the delights of the grave and its punishments, the Bridge over Hellfire (as-sirat), the Scales (al-meezaan) and other matters, but without giving a figurative interpretation (ta'weeL) to any of this.

11 - To have faith in the Intercession (shafaa'ah) of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and the Intercession of other Prophets, the Angels, the righteous and others, on the Day of Resurrection; the details of which occur in the authentic evidences.

12 - The fact that the Believers will see their Lord on the Day of Resurrection, in Paradise and on the plains where people will be gathered, is absolutely true. Whosoever denies it, or twists its meaning, is astray and deviated. It is not possible for anyone to see Allaah in his world.

13 - The extraordinary occurrences (karaamaat) of the friends of Allaah (awliyaa) and the righteous are true. The mere occurrence of an extraordinary incident is not necessarily a karaamah. Rather, such an event may occur as a result of a delusion, or by the devils and sorcerers. The criterion for distinguishing between all this is whether or not that extraordinary occurrence, as well as the individual performing it, are in agreement with the Book and the Sunnah.

14 - All the Believers are close friends of Allaah (awliyaa). Every Believer possesses closeness to Allaah (wilaayah) according to their level of faith and piety.

-3-
TAWHEED IN INTENT AND OBJECTIVES (TAWHEEDUL-ULOOHIYYAH)

1 - Allaah, the Most High, is One and Alone. He has no partner in His Lordship (ruboobiyyah), nor in His Divinity (Uloohiyyah), nor in His Names and Attributes. He alone is Lord of the worlds, Who deserves that all forms of worship should be directed to Him alone.

2 - To direct any form of worship, such as;

Supplication (du'aa),
Seeking succour and help (istigaathah),
Seeking aid and assistance (isti'aanah),
Vowing (nadhr),
Slaughtering (dhabh),
Reliance and trust (tawakkul),
Reverential fear (khawf),
Hope (rajaa),
Love (mahabbah),

or other similar acts, to other than Allaah the Most High, constitutes ascribing partners to Allaah (shirk) - irrespective of who the worship was directed to; whether it was an angel, a Prophet, a righteous person, or someone other than this.

3 - From those fundamentals upon which worship is based is that Allaah is to be worshiped with love, fear and hope collectively. To worship Allaah with some of them without the other is misguidance. One of the scholars said:

> "Whosoever worships Allaah with only love is a heretic; whosoever worships Him with only fear is a Harooree; and whosoever worships Him with only hope is a Murji'ee."

4 - Absolute submission, pleasure and obedience are to be given only to Allaah and to His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. To believe that only Allaah the Exalted is the judge is a part of eemaan that He alone is Lord, and He alone deserves to be worshiped without ascribing to Him partners in His judgment or Command. To legislate by what Allaah has not permitted, to refer judgment back to the taaghoots; to follow a code of law other than that of Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam's, or to replace anything of the Sacred Law (sharee'ah) is all kufr (disbelief). Whosoever claims that someone is permitted to leave acting by the sacred Law has committed kufr.

5 - Judging by other than the judgment of Allaah is sometimes the greater form of disbelief (kufr akbar), whilst at other times it is kufr lesser than [the great] kufr. An example of the former would be to adhere to a law other than the Sacred Law of Allaah (sharee'ah), or to make judgment by other than it lawful. An example of the latter is to turn away from Allaah's Sacred Law in a specific case because of succumbing to one's false desires, but with one's overall adherence to Allaah's Sacred Law.

6 - To divide the Religion into an esoteric, inner reality (haqeeqah), which only the elite can be distinguished by, and an exoteric outer reality (sharee'ah), to which the general masses must adhere, to the exclusion of the elite, is falsehood. The same is the case for separating politics (siyaasah) and other than that, from the Religion. Indeed, whatever opposes the Sacred Law, whether it be esoteric realities, politics, or other than these, is either disbelief or misguidance (dalaalah), depending upon its level of opposition to the Sacred Law.

7 - None has knowledge of the hidden Unseen (ghayb), except Allaah alone. Believing that someone other than Allaah has knowledge of the ghayb constitutes disbelief. However, along with this, one must believe that Allaah has made some matters of the ghayb known to some of His Messengers.

8 - To believe the predictions of the fortune-tellers, astrologers and soothsayers (munajjims) constitutes kufr. Merely going to them and questioning them constitutes a major sin (kabeerah).

9 - The means of approach to Allaah (waseelah) that has been ordered in the Qur'aan, is to seek nearness to Allaah the Exalted with those acts of obedience that have been prescribed. Seeking nearness to Allaah (tawassul) is of three types: -

> **Prescribed (shar'ee);** this is to invoke Allaah by calling upon Him by using His Names and Attributes, or by mentioning one's righteous action, or by the invocation of a righteous living person.
>
> **Innovated (bid'ee);** seeking closeness to Allaah by invoking Allaah with the personage (dhaat), honour (jaah), right (haqq) or sanctity (hurmah) of the Prophets and the righteous, or their like.
>
> **Polytheistic (shirkee);** this is where the dead are taken as intermediaries between a person and Allaah, supplicating to them and seeking the fulfilment of one's needs through them, seeking their assistance, and other similar acts.

10 - Divine blessings (barakah) - which is the affirmation, the increase or the continuance of good and excellence -occurs from Allaah. He selects whosoever He chooses from His creation for this. One may not affirm the existence of barakah, except with a proof. Barakah is found in certain times; such as the Night of Power and Decree (Laylatul-Qadr); in certain places, like the three Sacred Mosques; in certain things, like in Zamzam water; in certain actions - and every righteous action is blessed, and in certain individuals, like in the personage (dhaat) of the Prophets. It is not permissible to seek the barakah of any individual - either by their personage or their relics and remnants (aathaar), except that of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam's personage and relics. This is because there is no evidence to do so, except for him. However, seeking barakah through the Prophet sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam has ceased with his death and with the disappearance of his relics and remnants, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam.

11 - Seeking Divine blessings (tabarruk) in something can only be affirmed by a textual proof (tawqeefiyyah). Therefore it is not permissible to seek tabarruk, except in that for which there is an evidence to do so.

12 - The actions of people at the grave, and their visiting the graves (ziyaarah) is of three types: -

Prescribed - this is to visit the graves with the intention of being reminded of death, sending greetings of peace (salaam) upon its inhabitants, and supplicating for them.

Innovated - and this negates the perfection and completeness of tawheed and is a means leading to shirk - and it is to go to the graves intending to worship and draw closer to Allaah at them, to seek tabarruk from them and their inhabitants, to offer the rewards of one's good actions to the dead, to build shrines over them, to plaster and light candles at them, to take them as a place of Prayer, to specifically undertake journeys to the graves; and other similar actions.

Polytheistic - which nullifies Tawheed - and it is to direct any act of worship to the inmate of the grave; such as supplicating to them, seeking their assistance, ritually circumambulating (tawaaf) around them, sacrificing and vowing at them, and its like.

13 - The means (wasaa`il) carry the same ruling as their objectives. Therefore, every avenue that leads to shirk in the worship of Allaah, or innovations in the Religion - then it obligatory to forbid it. This is because

every newly-invented matter in the Religion is an innovation (bid`ah), and every bid`ah is misguidance and a heresy.

-4-
FAITH (EEMAAN)

1 - Faith (eemaan) consists of statement (qawl) and action (`amal). It increases [with obedience] and decreases [with disobedience]. It comprises of statement of the heart and the tongue, and [comprises] action by the heart, tongue and limbs.

The statement of the heart is its; beliefs (i'tiqaad), and its affirmation that these beliefs are true (tasdeeq). The statement of the tongue is its acknowledgement of these beliefs (iqraar). The action of the heart is its surrender (tasleem) to Allaah, its purity and sincerity (ikhlaas) to Allaah, its submission (idhaanah) to Him, its love (hubb) and its desire (iraadah) to do righteous actions. The action of the limbs is to do that which has been ordered and to leave that which has been prohibited.

2 - Whosoever separates actions from eemaan, is a murji'ee. Whosoever enters into eemaan that whatever is not a part of it, is an innovator (mubtadi').

3 - Whosoever does not acknowledge the two testifications of faith (shahaadatayn), the title of eemaan is not affirmed for him, nor is its ruling; neither in this world, nor in the Hereafter.

4 - Islaam and Eemaan are two terms used by the Sharee'ah. Between these two terms is a common and shared meaning, from one perspective, and a distinct and separate meaning from another perspective. The term Muslim is applied to all those who affirm facing the Ka'bah in Prayer (ahlul-qiblah).

5 - Whoever commits a major sin, is not expelled from the fold of eemaan due to it. [The ruling upon him] in this world is that he is a Believer with deficient faith; and in the Hereafter he is under the Will (mashee'ah) of Allaah - if Allaah Wills, he will be forgiven and if Allaah Wills, he will be punished. All those who worship Allaah alone (muwahhidoon) will enter Paradise, even if some will be punished in the Hellfire first. However, none from the muwahhidoon will be consigned to the Hellfire eternally.

6 - It is not permissible to designate with certainty that a particular individual from the Muslims will be in Paradise or Hellfire, except if there is an authentic text to affirm this.

7 - According to the Sharee'ah wordings, disbelief (kufr) is of two types: **The greater disbelief** (kufr akbar), which expels a person from the fold of Islaam completely, and **the lesser disbelief** (kufr asghar), which does not expel a

person from the fold of Islaam. This second type is sometimes known as kufr 'amalee (disbelief in action).

8 - Excommunication, or judging a Muslim to be an unbeliever (takfeer) is amongst the rulings of the Sacred Law, which must therefore be referred back to the Book and the Sunnah. It is not permissible to pronounce takfeer upon a Muslim due to a statement or action that he may have said or done, unless there exists an evidence from the Sacred Law to do so. The ruling of kufr is not to be unrestrictedly applied to any specific individual who may have uttered kufr or done an action of kufr, unless and until the conditions for doing so have been fulfilled (tahqeeqush-shuroot) and all the impediments [such as ignorance or coercion] have been negated (intifaa'ul-mawaani'). The issue of takfeer is from the most dangerous of the legislative rulings, so it is obligatory to thoroughly verify and to exercise extreme caution about making takfeer upon a Muslim.

-5-
The Qur'aan and THE SPEECH OF ALLAAH

1 - The Qur'aan is the Speech (kalaam) of Allaah, in both wording and meaning. It was sent down and is uncreated (ghayr makhlooq). From Allaah it originated and to Him shall it return. It is an inimitable miracle, indicative of the truthfulness of what the Prophet sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam was sent with. Its text and meanings are preserved from corruption until the Day of judgement.

2 - Allaah the Most High Speaks whatever He wills, when He wills and how He wills. The Speech of Allaah is real (haqeeqah), with letter (harf) and voice (sawt), but we do not know about the modality and how it is (kayfiyyah), nor do we debate about it or delve into it.

3 - The view that the Speech of Allaah is only the meaning of what Allaah spoke to himself, or that the Qur'aan is a narrative (hikaayah), or an expression ('ibaarah), or a metaphor (majaaz) of Allaah's Speech, or that it is an effluent outpouring (faydh) - or other views similar to these - are all misguidance and deviation and could sometimes amount to disbelief (kufr).

4 - Whoever denies anything of the Qur'aan, or claims that parts of it have been deleted, added, or corrupted, is an unbeliever.

5 - It is obligatory to explain the Qur'aan in accordance with the well-known methodology of the Salaf. It is not permissible to explain the Qur'aan by mere opinion, since this amounts to speaking about Allaah without due knowledge. Explaining the Qur'aan using esoteric interpretations (ta`weelaatul-baatiniyyah) and its like is actually a form of kufr.

-6-
PRE DECREE AND PRE DESTINATION

1 - From the pillars of eemaan is to have faith in Pre-Decree and Pre-Destination (al-qadr), and that its good and evil outcomes are from Allaah. And this encompasses believing in all the texts that are connected to al-qadr and its [four] levels:

> That Allaah has absolute and perfect knowledge of everything (al-'ilm),
> That Allaah wrote this all in the Preserved Tablet (al-kitaabah),
> That nothing can occur except by the Will of Allaah (al-mashee'ah),
> That Allaah is the creator of everything (al-khalq).

It is also obligatory to have faith in the fact that none can repel Allaah's Decree, or amend His Judgment.

2 - Allaah's Will (iraadah) and Command (amr) that occur in the Book and the Sunnah are of two types: -

> i. A Universal Will (iraadah kawniyyah qadariyyah); meaning that whatever He Desires and Commands will occur [and none of the creation escapes this type of Will].
>
> ii. A Legislative Will (iraadah shar'iyyah); meaning that Allaah desires that His legislations should be complied with [so some choose to comply whilst others choose to disobey]. Even though created beings do possess both a desire and a will to choose what to do, their desire and will are subordinate to the Desire and Will of Allaah.

3 - It is solely in Allaah's Hand whether the servants of Allaah are either guided or left to stray. There are those whom Allaah guides from His grace and there are those who deserve to be led astray due to His justice.

4 - Both the slaves and their actions are created by Allaah the Most High, besides Whom there is no other Creator. Although Allaah alone is the Creator of man's actions, yet man is the true and literal performer of his own actions.

5 - To affirm that Allaah's Actions are due to a wisdom; and to affirm that the causal effects exist by Allaah the Exalted's Will.

6 - The life-spans of all people are pre-written and their provisions are pre-apportioned. Likewise, the joys and miseries of people have been written down before they were created.

7 - Whilst the occurrence of calamities and harms may justifiably be from the Decree (qadr) of Allaah, it is not permissible to justify one's faults and sins by it. Rather, it is obligatory to repent from one's sins and the blame for it falls upon its perpetrator.

8 - Depending solely upon the means (asbaab) actually amounts to shirk in one's tawheed. To totally turn away from the means is actually belittling the Sacred Law. Indeed, to deny the outcomes and consequences of the causes contradicts both the Sacred Law and the sound intellect. Trusting and relying upon Allaah (tawakkul) does not negate utilising the relevant causes and necessary means.

-7-
THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND ITS LEADERSHIP

1 - The term al-Jamaa’ah, in this context, refers to the Companions of the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam and those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection; those who cling to their way and to their narrations. It is they who are the Saved-Sect. All those who cling to their methodology (manhaj) are from the Jamaa’ah, even if they err in some specific issues.

2 - It is not permissible to cause splits in the Religion, nor to cause trials and discord (fitnah) between the Muslims. Whatever the Muslims differ in, then it is obligatory to refer it back to the Book of Allaah, the Sunnah of His Messenger sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, and what the Salafus-Saalih (Pious Predecessors) were [agreed] upon.

3 - Whosoever leaves the Jamaa’ah, then it is obligatory to give him sincere counsel and advice (naseehah), to call him [to what is correct], to discuss with him in a good manner and to establish the proofs to him. If he repents, then fine, otherwise he is to be punished in accordance with what the Sacred Law requires.

4 - It is obligatory to cultivate the Muslims upon the clear and decisive meanings of the Book, the Sunnah, and the scholarly consensus. It is not permissible to test (imtihaan) the general body of Muslims regarding issues that are abstruse and subtle, or regarding meanings that are deep and profound.

5 - The basic rule (asl) concerning all Muslims is that they are deemed to possess good intent and sound belief, until and unless the opposite of this becomes manifest. The basic rule is to construe their words upon their best possible meaning. Whosoever manifests resistance to the truth or displays evil intent, then it is not permitted to go to great lengths in finding a suitable explanation to it.

6 - Those Muslim sects that have departed from the fold of the Sunnah are all under the threat (wa'eed) of destruction and [punishment in] the Hellfire. The ruling concerning them is like the ruling concerning the people who are under the threat of Allaah's punishment (ahlul-wa'eed), except for those amongst them who are inwardly unbelievers. As regards the pseudo-Muslim sects that are outside the fold of Islaam, then in general, they are to be considered unbelievers. The ruling concerning them is like that of the apostates (murtadoon).

7- The Friday Prayer and the Congregational Prayers are from the greatest manifest symbols (sha'aa'ir) of Islaam. Prayer behind one whose true nature is hidden is valid and correct. To not pray behind him claiming that his true state is unknown, is an innovation (bid'ah).

8 - It is not permissible to pray behind someone who manifests innovation or wickedness and impiety (fujoor) when it is possible to pray behind other than them. If it does take place, then the Prayer will be deemed valid and correct, but the performer of such a Prayer will have sinned - unless he intended by that to repel a greater evil. If one cannot find anyone to pray behind, except someone of the likes of him, or greater in evil than him, then to pray behind such a person is permitted, and it is not permissible to abandon praying behind him. Whoever is judged to have committed unbelief (kufr), then Prayer behind him is not permissible.

9 - The leadership of the whole nation (imaamatul-kubraa) is decided by either scholarly consensus or by the pledge of fealty and allegiance (bay'ah) given by those Muslims who have the political power to enact or dissolve a pledge to the ruler (ahlul-halli wal-aqd). Whoever takes power by force, such that he gathers the Muslims under him, then it is obligatory to obey him in that which constitutes obedience to Allaah, and to give him sincere advice and counsel. It is not permissible to revolt against the Muslim ruler except in cases where he manifests clear unbelief (kufr buwaah), for which there is a decisive proof from Allaah concerning it.

10 - Performance of Prayer, Pilgrimage and Jihaad are all obligatory under the Muslim leaders, even if they are tyrannical.

11 - It is forbidden for the Muslims to fight between themselves out of worldly motives or out of partisanship. Such actions are from amongst the greatest of the major sins. It is permitted to fight the innovators and the rebels (ahlul-baghee) - and the likes of them - if it is not possible to prevent them with measures lesser than this. This is to be determined according to the resultant benefits and the situation at hand.

12 - The noble Companions are all trustworthy ('udool) and they are the best of this Ummah. Testifying to their faith and excellence is an absolute fundamental that is known from the Religion by necessity (al-ma'loom minad-deen bid-daroorah). To love them is part of Religion and faith. To hate them is unbelief and hypocrisy. It is necessary to withhold from entering into the differences that befell them and to abandon discussing this matter so as not to belittle their rank and station. The most excellent of the Companions was Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmaan, then 'Alee. They are the Rightly-Guided Successors. The right concerning their succession (khilaafah) was in the exact order that it occurred historically.

13 - The Religion includes loving the Family (ahlul-bayt) of Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam; having allegiance for them; honoring their status; and recognizing the excellence of his Wives, who Allaah has declared to be the Mothers of the Believers (ummuhaatul-mu'mineen). [The Religion] includes loving the Pious Predecessors, the scholars of the Sunnah,

and all those who follow them in goodness. It also includes keeping away from the innovators.

14 - Jihaad in the Path of Allaah is the top most part of Islaam; and it will continue on until the Day of Resurrection.

15 - Ordering the good and forbidding the evil is from the greatest symbols of Islaam and amongst the causes, which preserve and protect the Muslim community. This duty is an obligation according to one's ability, taking into consideration the resultant benefits (maslahah) in doing so.

THE MOST DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF AHLUS-SUNNAH

Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah are the Saved-Sect [in the Hereafter] and the Victorious and Aided Group [in this world]. Despite the distance of [time and place] between them, they possess certain characteristics, which distinguishes them from others. From these characteristics are: -

1 - They attach great importance to the Book of Allaah; its memorisation, [correct] recitation and its explanation (tafseer). They attach great importance to the Hadeeth; through their knowledge and understanding of it and their distinguishing the authentic from the weak and false ones. This is because they [i.e. the Qur'aan and the authentic Hadeeth] are the root source for acquiring knowledge of their Religion. Furthermore, they couple their knowledge with action, according to the level of their knowledge.

2 - They enter into the Religion completely. They have faith in all of the Book; having faith in the textual promises and threats; in those texts that affirm [Allaah's Perfect Names and Attributes] and those that negate [any deficiency or resemblance to Him]. They combine having faith in Allaah's Pre-Decree along with affirming the fact that the slave possess free will and choice of action. They also combine knowledge along with worship, strength along with compassion and mercy, and utilising the necessary worldly means along with pious abstention from that which will be of no benefit in the Hereafter (zuhd).

3 - They follow the Sunnah and abandon innovations. They shun sectarian divisions and differences in the Religion.

4 - They follow the guidance of the trustworthy scholars - the Companions and those who traverse their path - following them in knowledge, actions and calling to Allaah. They keep away from those who oppose their path.

5 - They adhere to the balanced position. So in matters of beliefs, they hold a balanced position between those sects that go to extremes and those that fall short of what is required. Likewise, in actions and conduct (sulook) they adhere to a middle position between those who exceed the limits and those who fall short.

6 - They strive to unite the word of the Muslims upon the truth, and to unify their ranks upon Tawheed and adherence (ittibaa) and to stay clear from all avenues that lead to divisions and differences between them. From this standpoint, they do not distinguish themselves from the rest of the Muslims - in matters concerning the fundamentals of the Religion - with any other name, except that of the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah. Likewise, they do not form allegiance (walaa) or enmity ('adaa) with anyone upon a bond other than Islaam and the Sunnah.

7 - They call to Allaah, to enjoining the good, forbidding the evil, Jihaad, rejuvenating the Sunnah, reviving the Religion, and establishing the Prescribed Law of Allaah and His Rule, in every matter, large or small.

8 - They exercise fairness and justice. So they observe the right of Allaah the Most High and do not look towards their own self-interests or that of their group's. This is why they do not exploit others, nor wrong them, nor do they belittle the excellence of those who possess it; no matter who they may be.

9 - They possess a uniformity in understanding, and a similarity in their stances, even though there may be a great distance between their respective lands and times. This is from the fruits of them possessing a single source and a single methodology for acquiring [knowledge of the fundamentals].

10 - They show kindness (ihsaan), mercy (rahmah), and good manners (husnul-khulq) towards all people.

11 - They are sincere to Allaah, His Book, His Messenger, and are sincere towards and give sincere advice to the Muslims leaders and the general body of Muslims.

12 - They are concerned with the affairs of the Muslims; aiding and assisting them, observing their rights and seeking to prevent harm or injury from reaching them.

appendix one
THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECT[1]

Footnote 1 (Mubaahith fee 'Aqeedah Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah (p.28) of Shaykh Naasir al-'Aql)

The 'aqeedah has two fundamental sources, which are: -

1 - The Book of Allaah - the Most High (the Noble Qur'aan).

2 - What is authentic from Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. Since the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam does not speak from his desires, rather his words are Divine Revelation sent down to him.

And the consensus (Ijmaal of the Pious Predecessors (salaf-us--saalih); a source based upon the Book and the Sunnah. [Refer to Al-I'tisaam (2252) of ash-Shaatibee].

As regards the natural state (fitrah) and the sound intellect ('aql) then they will agree with and conform to the Book and the Sunnah and will be able to arrive at the general principles of 'aqeedah - but not its details. So the 'aql and fitrah affirm - in general - Allaah's existence and that He is Most Great, that it is essential to obey and to worship Him; and that He has the Attributes of Greatness and Perfection. Likewise, the sound and correct 'aql and fitrah realise the necessity of there being Prophets, the sending of Messengers and that there has to be Resurrection and requital of actions; but only in general, not in detail.

However, as for other matters and the rest of the matters of the Unseen, then there is no way to find them out in detail, except by way of the Book and the Sunnah, otherwise it would not be from the Unseen.

And contradiction between a clear text of the Book and the Sunnah and between the sound 'aql cannot be imagined and is infact an impossibility. If there appears to be a contradiction between the two, then the Revelation is given precedence and is considered decisive [Consult Sharhul-Aqeedatut-Tahaawiyyah (pp.140-141) of Ibn Abil-'Izz al-Hanafee. Also refer to Dar' Ta'aarudil-Aql ma'an-Naql I/88-280) of Ibn Taymiyyah. Indeed, refer to the whole book, as it is very beneficial in this matter], since it comes from the one who is infallible, sallallaau 'alayhi wa sallam whereas the 'aql of a person is not infallible. Indeed, the 'aql is the deficient perception of humans; it is open to misconception, error, forgetfulness, desires, ignorance and inability. Thus it is something that is certainly deficient.

appendix two
The Meaning of SPLITTING-UP[2]

Footnote 2 [Iftiraaq, Mafhoomahu, Ashaabahu Subulul-Waqaayati Minhu (pp.6-7) of Shaykh Naasir al-'Aql.]

The lexical meaning of splitting-up (iftiraaq) is: Fragmentation, which is disunity, separation, cutting-off. It is also derived from the term divergence and abberation. From it comes [the expression]: Departure from the fundamental, or from the path, or from the united body [Consult Lisaanul-'Arab (10/299) of Ibn Mandhoor].

The technical meaning of iftiraaq is: Departing from the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah in one or more of the decisive (qat'ee) fundamantal precepts (usool) of the Religion - whether it be a precept of belief, or one of the decisive fundamental precepts connected to actions, or to the greater welfare of the ummah.

Abu Hurayrah radiallaahu 'anhu narrated from the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhu wa sallam who said:

> **"Whoever leaves obedience and separates from the Jamaa'ah and dies, dies a death of ignorance. Whoever fights under the banner of the blind; becoming angry for partisanship, or calling to partisanship, or assisting partisanship and is killed, is killed [in the cause of] ignorance. Whoever rebels against my ummah, killing both the righteous and the wicked of them, not sparing even the believers, nor those who have been given a pledge of security, is not from me, nor am I from him."**
> [Reported by Muslim no.1848]

Therefore, opposing Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah in any of the fundamental precepts of belief ('aqeedah) is deemed as splitting (iftiraaq) and separating from the Jamaa'ah. Opposing the consensus (ijmaa) of the Muslim scholars is deemed as splitting and separating from the Jamaa'ah, and opposing the united body of Muslims and their leader, in what is from the [issues of] great welfare, is deemed as splitting and separating from the Jamaa'ah. Departing from the consensus of the Muslim scholars is an act of splitting since it is separating from the Jamaa'ah.

The greater disbelief (kufr akbar) is counted as splitting, whereas not every splitting is disbelief. What is meant by this is that every act or belief which causes a person to leave the fundamentals of Islaam, or any of the decisive

matters of the Religion, or from the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah in that which necessitates disbelief, has indeed separated and split. However, not every splitting is disbelief. Meaning that if a party or a group of people fall into [a matter] of splitting, they are not to be described with disbelief unless they split from the Jamaa'ah of the Muslims in a particular action [which necessitates this]. An example is the splitting of the Khawaarij. For the Khawaanj were the first people to split from the ummah, they rebelled against the ummah with the sword and split from the Jamaa'ah of the Muslims and its leader. However, the Companions did not apply the ruling of disbelief upon them, rather they differed concerning this. That is why when 'Alee radiallaahu 'anhu was asked concerning them, he did not apply the ruling of disbelief to them. The same was the case with Ibn 'Umar and other Companions - may Allaah be pleased with them all - who used to pray behind Najdah, the Khaarijee and Ibn 'Abbaas agreed to debate Naafi' ibn al-Azraq with the Qur'aan; debating with him [on the basis that Naafi' was] a Muslim. [Consult Minaahjus-Sunnah (5/247-248) of Ibn Taymiyyah].

appendix three
The Distinction Between Splitting And Differing[3]

Footnote 3 [Iftiraaq, Mafhoomahu, Ashaabahu Subulul-Waqaayati Minhu (pp.8-10]

Distinguishing between splitting (iftiraaq) and differing (ikhtilaaf) is an extremely important matter. It is essential that such an issue be referred back to the people of knowledge, since most people - especially some of the callers to Islaam (du'aat) and some of the students of knowledge who have not fully matured in their understanding of the Religion - do not make a distinction between issues of differing and issues of splitting. Because of this, some of them apply the ruling of splitting to issues of differing; and this is a dreadful mistake! The root cause of this is ignorance of the fundamental principles governing matters of splitting; when and how it occurs, and who decides if and when it is allowed to split away from a particular individual or group.

It is essential, therefore, to mention the distinctions between splitting and differing. Five such distinctions shall be mentioned by way of example, not that they are the only points of distinction:

The First Distinction: That splitting (iftiraaq) is a severer form of differing (ikhtilaaf), rather it is the consequence of differing because differences of opinion may or may not lead to the bounds of splitting. However, splitting is actually differing plus more, though not every differing is splitting - a point which forms the basis for the second distinction.

The Second Distinction: Not every issue of differing is an issue of splitting, though every splitting is differing. Indeed, many of the issues about which the Muslims dispute are actually issues of differing, Therefore it is not permitted to apply the ruling of disbelief upon those who differ, nor the ruling of splitting from them, nor the ruling of expelling them from the fold of the Sunnah.

The Third Distinction: That splitting (iftiraaq) only occurs in the great fundamentals (usool kubraa); **those fundamentals of the Religion in which there is no scope for differing; those issues that have been established by a definite (qat'ee) text, or by a scholarly consensus (Umaal, or for which the scholars of AhlusSunnah wal Jamaa'ah have undertaken a thorough evaluation and do not differ about its conclusion.** So whatever is like this is considered to be a fundamental precept (asl) and the one who opposes it is considered to have split away. Whatever else is besides this, then it enters into matters of differences. Thus differing (ikhtilaaf) occurs in issues other than the fundamentals; issues which

are open to a number of opinions, open to ijtihaad, open to the possibility of being applied to any of the opinions; for which the one holding a view has some justification to do so, or due to the possibility of a lack of knowledge, coercion or mistaken interpretation. So all of this is in matters of ijtihaad and subsidiary issues (furoo). Differing can also occur in certain subsidiary matters that are connected to the actual fundamentals themselves, for which the holder of such a view can be excused due to a justified excuse, as determined by the reliable scholars of the Religion. These subsidiary issues may even be in matters of beliefs ('aqeedah), about which there is an agreement upon its fundamentals, but in which there is a difference of opinion in some of its details; such as the consensus of the scholars concerning the occurrence of the Night Journey and Ascension (al-israa wal-miraaj), but their differing about whether the Prophet sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam saw His Lord with his eyes or his heart.

The Fourth Distinction: That differences may at times be the result of ijtihaad and good intentions - and providing he is endeavouring to seek the truth, such a person is rewarded even if he is mistaken. Although the one who is correct receives a greater reward, but the one who errs is still commended for his ijtihaad. However, if the issue reaches the level of splitting, then it becomes totally blameworthy. Splitting is never due to ijtihaad and good intentions and its proponent is never rewarded, rather he is censured and sinful in all cases. Therefore, splitting does not occur except due to innovations, or following whims and desires, or due to the blameworthy type of imitation (taqleed madhmoom).

The Fifth Distinction: That splitting is connected with a Divine threat (wa'eed) and all its forms lead to deviation and destruction. But this is not the case for differing, no matter how intense the differing may become between Muslims - as long as it is an issue in which ijtihaad is allowed. As for the one who holds a differing view, then it may be that he has some justification for his stance; it may be due to him being unaware of the proofs, or because of being compelled and no one else knows about this compulsion, or due to a mistaken interpretation which does not become evident to him until after the proofs have been established to him.